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## THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NURSE

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SOCIAL development is a biologic process. It is dictated by the simple economic principle of division of labor. In the simple forms of life—forms that consist of only a single cell—all function is performed by the organism as a whole; and so, in primitive society, each and every individual ministers to his own simple, but several needs.

In the social history of man this principle of the division of labor is applied at so early a phase in his development as to suggest strongly its biologic quality. The hewers of wood and the drawers of water were distinctive in very early times. Moreover, the division of social labor is accomplished by precisely the same methods as is the division of biologic labor.

The differentiation of bone-cell and muscle-cell and gland-cell and nerve-cell in the animal organism and the endowment of each with its own specialized functions, is suggestive of the same process by which the individual in society is differentiated from the mass, by special aptitudes and by distinctive training, to the doing of highly specialized tasks.

And as in nature, so in human society—which, after all, is but one of the mechanisms of nature,—this process of division of labor, of adaptation to special use, of the attainment of specialized power, is a slow, a continuing, and by no means an accomplished one. It is a process that is persistently going on. And, both biologically and socially, some of the most valuable units of the organisms, as a whole, have been the last to differentiate in form and the last to attain to the exhibition of their characteristic functions. Notably has this been true of the social specialization of woman.

Planted in the home, by virtue of her fundamental quality as “the great unchanging trunk in the genealogic tree,” she has fulfilled therein a variety of subsidiary functions for which she has been generally, but not specifically, fit. Housekeeper, food-provider, cook, laundress, seamstress and nurse, she has been a veritable *multum in parvo*; but while usually apt in the performance of one or another of the duties proper to these several spheres of usefulness, they have been only the incidents of her home career. It goes without saying that she has been a rare specimen of her kind who has been able to do all of these things and to do them well.

In comparatively recent times, the differentiation of woman along occupational lines has been seriously undertaken, but her opportunities of special training have been extremely meagre and she has usually looked upon her specific employment, in any line, as avocational and temporary. Failing of marriage, and the failure must be recognized as increasingly frequent, she has become, sooner or later, as the incompetent always become, a derelict upon her social and, too often, unfriendly sea. Many, indeed, are the women of to-day who engage in the several features of household and family service; yet few are they who can be regarded as called or chosen and fewer still as, in any adequate sense, fitted to any particular career.

Nevertheless, a new era in the social development of women has begun. Science and mechanical art, addressed to the problems of practical living, to household sanitation and personal hygiene, to preventive and curative medicine, have found their way into the home life of the people and have brought into it new ideals. They are establishing new standards of service and society is no longer satisfied with amateur effort and its very uncertain results.

Trained efficiency, in the market-place, in the kitchen, the laundry, the sewing room and the sick room is in demand. New conceptions of the value of human health are forming; and new agencies of its preservation and restoration are being employed. Hygienic living is becoming a matter for serious consideration and human illness a subject of scientific care. The home is no longer regarded as the safest haven of the ill and the mother no longer considers herself the adequate nurse of the family in the event of sickness.

The modern hospital has become a Friendly Inn in its health restoring and life-saving capacity and the modern nurse is now the recognized instrument, in either home or hospital, of trained scientific service to the sick. The evolution of the hospital has been the evolver of the nurse. Without the agency of the hospital, as the training-ground, as the practical laboratory of the nurse, her so rapid evolution would have been impossible. The profession of nursing,—for it has achieved the dignity of a profession,—owes much to its foster-mother, the modern hospital. If, in turn, the hospital has demanded much of its pupil-nurses, it must be remembered that a mutuality of loyalty and service an Alma Mater has a right to claim. And an unchartered Alma Mater of the trained nurse the hospital has been. If the hospital's need of the nurse in training has been great, the hospital of the past half century has made the existence of the trained nurse a possibility.

If the training school has sometimes been exploited for the benefit of the hospital, the fact is condoned by the circumstances of the developmental period through which hospital and school have been alike passing. Such exploitation is no longer either necessary or permissible.

To-day the evolution of the modern hospital is complete and the position of the trained nurse in society is an established one. The hospital which through endowment, appropriation or means of self-support is unable to stand upon its feet and to provide fit educational opportunities for its pupil nurses, without taxing their labor too heavily for its own benefit, should forego the privilege of teaching. The nursing profession is organized and that organization which has already determined the conditions of the legalized practice of nursing, in many states, will speedily dictate also the standards of the education of the nurse.

The hospital and the nursing profession which have been so interdependent in the past, will remain coöperative in the future. The general hospital must assume a definite educational function for the exercise of which it must be duly equipped and must maintain an adequate teaching force. This educational function should be confined to those institutions which have an adequate and sufficiently varied hospital service and which can afford a stated minimum of opportunity for training. If the minor or special hospital is to be permitted to conduct a training school for nurses at all, its courses should be regarded as preliminary or partial and they should be supplemented by advanced work in the general hospital prior to graduation and registration.

At the present juncture, it behooves the profession of nursing to rise to its waiting occasion, to follow in the footsteps of the related profession of medicine in dictating the terms upon which schools for nurses shall be legalized and their graduates received into practice.

The occasion must be met in a large public spirit. The horizon of service in the mind of the profession must be widened. It may erect no proprietary barriers to its ranks. It may adopt no close corporation methods. The day of professional privilege has gone by; the day of professional service has come. The educational standards of the profession of nursing must be set with an eye single, a spirit loyal, to the public good. For, after all, it is the public need for which the trained nurse exists.

These standards of education should prescribe, first of all, the initial conditions of fitness in the candidate for training. Such fitness cannot

be certificated; it must be personally determined. A good physique, an adequate muscular development, sound heart and lungs and normal blood should be determined by medical examination, conducted by a physician regularly attached to the school. A definite degree of preliminary education should be required, not merely in the printed announcements of a school, but in fact. That quick intelligence which is native, rather than acquired; that ready sympathy which is the funded quality of human kindness; that moral sense which measures accurately its own course of conduct, rather than another's;—these are qualities which are as indispensable in the candidate for nursing as they are indefinable, save to that sort of student of human nature who should be at the head of a training school.

There is a certain modicum of knowledge in the sciences fundamental to the practice alike of medicine and of nursing which we of the University of Minnesota believe should be attained before the hospital service of the nurse has begun. We believe in an eight-hour day for the high-class laborer of the nursing-field and we do not think that to the strenuous duties of such a day should be added the too frequent lectures which are usually crowded into an undergraduate course. Moreover, we believe that from the outset of her practical work the student who has first acquired that knowledge of the fundamentals of her calling will profit more fully by every detail of her training than will one who is obliged to sandwich in so much of her theory between the intervals of practice.

Training schools which are not connected with teaching institutions might readily affiliate with them and could thus secure for their matriculants the necessary preparatory courses in anatomy, physiology, materia medica, bacteriology and chemistry, to which may be very wisely added short courses in English, lettering and physical culture.

The standards of training set by the organized profession of nursing should require that hospital teaching be properly graded. From the medical wards for both sexes, to the surgical wards, to the obstetrical service, to the children's department, to groups of special cases, to the outpatient service and, if possible, to the visiting field, where the pupil can learn the adaptations of the principles of institutional service to private nursing, these are the ideal steps in the progressive order of school training.

There is an especial value to the pupil-nurse in the practical drill of outpatient work, particularly in minor ailments and accident cases. Such an experience serves to counteract the institutional tendency to

the development of the nursing automaton, to quicken the student in the exercise of an intelligent initiative, to encourage her resourcefulness in meeting immediate needs, to test and to train the personal poise and courage, in the face of emergencies, which will stand her in good stead in many a trying hour.

Such a graded course of training is quite possible in any large general hospital and has been achieved, already, in certain institutions. As the hospital of this type and this achievement comes under the ownership and control of, or becomes more closely affiliated with the teaching institution, the graduate in nursing should receive a recognized degree, which should serve as the public guaranty of the quality of her training.

Through the influence of the organized nursing profession and through the mutual coöperation of the schools for nurses in each and every state, the education of the nurse is to be standardized, in the near future. Does that seem to be a rash prophecy? It is not a prophecy at all. It is a vision, a prescient vision, perhaps, that is born of faith in the persistence of those principles which underlie all social development, in the fulfillment of those high purposes which inspire all real social progress. Education, everywhere and in every vocational field, is being standardized; and education in the nursing field will prove no exception to the rule. The schools must combine for the determination of a minimum of requirements, a common measure of fitness in their graduates.

It is a large work upon which the graduate nurse of to-day enters. The field of private practice is becoming a very wide one. It puts strenuous demands upon her, but it offers her great and substantial rewards. The very least of those rewards is the wage for which she works. Such labor as hers should be well compensated and it will be; but the constant pull upon her personal sympathy, the daily call upon her womanly tenderness, the sure reliance of the weak upon her strength, the lift of the heavy burden of human suffering, the challenge to her faith to endure in the face of every discouragement, in the stress of every danger, the consciousness of a work worth doing and well done,—these are the real recompenses of the true women of the nursing profession.

For every graduate the broadening experiences of some years of varied private practice is to be desired. An interesting study of the profession, as a whole, and a personal acquaintance with many nurses, extending over thirty years, prompts one to suggest (1) that the graduate may wisely seek the opportunities of service in the smaller and less

crowded cities and (2) that she do not attempt practice in her own home town. Human beings are like many plant forms; they require transplanting and in their early growth they thrive best in a not too thickly planted soil. It should take a few years to settle the question of her ultimate employ. Her destiny should not crystallize too soon. She should not allow herself to get planted too deep. She must not fix her goal within the limits of her every-day horizon. He does not grow old in heart or stale in service who keeps beyond the hills of his present—the poet's Carcassonne,—the land of his heart's desire.

It is inevitable, it is, indeed, desirable that many nursing women leave the calling they have chosen for the higher potentiality of marriage. That they are fitted for a vocation in which they are self-dependent gives them that freedom of choice in the matter of marriage which should raise its potential of happiness by many degrees. If they choose to test that potential in the actual of their life experience, they will find their chances for success in the high calling of wifehood and motherhood far greater because they have had the training and because they possess the knowledge which comes of the training, of the nurse.

Nevertheless, it is true that larger numbers of women, than in former days, are entering the profession of nursing who regard it, not as a temporary avocation, but as a life-vocation. It is to be hoped that this is true, because no great success is likely to attend work that is purely temporary. Those who cherish this sense of the permanent value of the calling they have elected to follow, must realize that with their graduation from the training school their education has only begun. It should be a continuing process into which every day's experience is funded. But, beyond this, they should entertain and cherish the prospect of post-graduate study. The opportunity of graduate work which now offers itself to many means progress. It stands for the open door to larger possibilities than private nursing will afford. The avenues of extended usefulness to which it leads are many.

In the profession of nursing are missionary spirits who find in the field of visiting nursing, not only a means to steady employment, but that large satisfaction which rewards these devoted women who, possessed, as they should be, of some knowledge of social economics and social pathology, go quietly and unpretentiously about,—doing good. The associations organized for this important service offer to the poor and unfortunate the same quality of trained nursing which the well-to-do can buy and combine with that service an educational influence, exercised by these trained workers, which extends, in the minds and the

homes of the people they serve, far beyond the relief of their immediate need.

There yet remains to devise some mechanism by which a large class of people in very moderate or meagre circumstances can secure the trained service of the nurse at such modest remuneration as they can afford to pay. It is in the homes of such people that the so-called "experienced nurse," a relic of the past of nursing, still gathers in return for a very inferior quality of nursing a self-perpetuating income. This problem has been widely discussed, in recent years, and the proposal is a practical one that nurses' guilds be organized, partially endowed and in part self-sustaining, which shall house groups of trained nurses, under a local manager and housekeeper, who shall be guaranteed an average income and detailed, at an agreed cost, graduated to the employer's ability to pay, to those applying for help.

Along institutional lines, calls for a high grade of service from trained nursing women are multiplying. Head-nurseships in private and public hospitals; directorships of the nursing forces in these institutions, in correctional homes and schools and in associated charities; superintendencies of hospitals; agencies investigative of the causes and active in the control of prevalent diseases and defects; social settlement bureau offices engaged in the study and betterment of sanitation in the homes of the people, are among the many openings that present themselves. They are places of honor and distinction and of large public usefulness which many might covet, but unfortunately few seek. The fact that they demand advanced study and special preparation debars many from these more highly specialized posts of public duty. Their enumeration serves to suggest the large range of usefulness and the wide scope which offers to the ambition of the nurse among trained workers.

The social feature is big with the opportunities for service which await the willing and the efficient. Neither the nurse nor the physician belongs to a privileged class, but rather to a profession of privilege—the privilege of service. Each is an answer to social need; to each are committed responsibilities for the conscientious discharge of which society holds the individual worker to account. Human life and human health are in their hands and the obligation which that commission involves lies heavy upon them. To whom much is given, of him much also is required.

The work of nursing women is arduous, but it has its exceeding great reward. Its worth is to be measured not by its dole of wages, but



by the quality and results of its service. The laborer is worthy of his hire and she who gives her fair and honest help and receives her fitting wage, may be a good servant. But she who, in her time and place, serves her day and generation unsparingly, who reckoning not of the reward she wins, does her work for its own sufficing sake and gives herself in unstinted measure, "is a laborer of a nobler order and worthy of a loftier guerdon." She who lays her gift upon the altar of specific beneficence goes away justified; but she who casts her impersonal mite into the treasury of the common good is of finer devotion and greater soul. She who puts forth her occasional and individual effort to lift the fallen and to cheer the faint is meet for the well-done of the faithful; but she who, unnoted, adds her daily cup of the water of social helpfulness to that mighty stream of endeavor, which seeks to remove the stains of the sin and to ease the heart-ache and the suffering of the world is a co-laborer together with Him Who gave to the world "The Gift of Gifts" and Who, in every act of devoted service of every loving heart of man, gives again Himself.

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### THREE INTERESTING CASES

SUBMITTED BY NURSES FROM THE CINCINNATI HOSPITAL

First Paper

#### CEREBROSPINAL MENINGITIS

By ANNA PATT AND MISS MILITZ

CEREBROSPINAL meningitis is an acute infectious disease characterized by inflammation of the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord. The epidemic form is caused by the *Diplococcus cellularis* of Weichselbaum. The disease is most common in thickly settled districts.

The period of incubation is uncertain—probably short, but one patient became ill two weeks after having been exposed. The onset is very sudden, usually with a chill, intense pain in head, neck, back, and joints, and uncontrollable vomiting. This, however, lasts only a short time. The muscles become rigid, and those of the face may be contracted. The opisthotonus may or may not be marked. (In one case, the patient was compelled to lie on his abdomen.) Eye conditions, such as inequality, strabismus, photophobia, or conjunctivitis, and ear conditions may also be present. Occasionally herpes occur on the lips and eruptions on the skin. These eruptions give the name of "spotted fever." The bowels